

THE SOUTH SIDE
SPORTSMEN'S
CLUB
OF LONG ISLAND

GHERARDI DAVIS



Colonel Henry A. Piegel



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OF THIS BOOK ONE HUNDRED AND
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IN JANUARY, MCMIX

THE SOUTH SIDE
SPORTSMEN'S
CLUB

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OF LONG ISLAND

BY
GHERARDI DAVIS



THE CLUB SEAL

NEW YORK
PRIVATELY PRINTED
MCMIX

I HAVE had the following pages printed for the benefit of my fellow-members of the South Side Club, and in them have put down such facts and stories as to me seemed most likely to be pleasant reading to those who may take the trouble to go over them. I have had the old pictures of the Club, as well as more recent ones, reproduced; they and these pages will, I hope, help keep fresh the memory of many a yarn, whether spun by the oldest or by the youngest member, of great days and greater nights at the South Side.

I might have told at length of many long-to-be-remembered scenes enacted in the Billiard Room, even in my rather short experience as a member. Should I have told of the evening when Charlie Fearing returned, and of the singing which welcomed him? Is it not perhaps better to let each man who spent that delightful evening at the South Side embroider his own memory with details? Or, again, should I have told of the day when Uncle Sam greeted us after the battle of Santiago, and our celebration of the victory? Would it have been better to have told of Heaton's capsizing a boat? Of Wilmerding's catching a wild duck on a cast at the flume? Of Tom Rhinelander's hooking a swallow on a back-cast, or of his brother Fred's repeating a hundred times how he caught

his record bass? Should I have preserved from oblivion the tale of Brownson's wonderful feat of taking two trout at the same time on the same fly? Or, again, should I tell of De Witt's wonderful straight flush? Some one else must write these stories down for future members to read, and perhaps doubt—although they are all true.

Had I begun, truly it would have been hard to say where to stop with members, nor should I have been able to overlook stories of Snedecor, Riley and "Josh" and other faithful employees of the Club.

Then, as to pictures, it was suggested to me to have a picture taken of Johnson playing solitaire, with Cochrane, Wilmerding, Minis, Hall, Gibbs and others as advisers. Again, I was urged to perpetu-

ate the scene of Wickham, William De Witt and Clarke over a game of dominoes, and the Mulligans, father and son, playing billiards. But I had to see to it that the book did not become too bulky, and I did not wish to become personal—for where should I then draw the line? Whom should I omit? I have nevertheless had a few pictures made which show groups of the Club habitués, groups which could not well be omitted from a history of the Club without its being incomplete. For these pictures, and for those of the Club House, the brook, the ponds and other views, I am especially indebted to Hall, Gibbs, Flint, Rhinelander, Heaton and to Mr. A. C. Wilmerding. Many of the older incidents to which I refer were told me by Mr. Herbert R. Clarke.

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

If, now, I have omitted some pet story of some particular member, or have printed a picture another member may not like, I hope to be pardoned. I only wish that you may all derive as much enjoyment from the book as getting it up has given me pleasure.

GHERARDI DAVIS

New York, October, 1908.

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INCORPORATED 6TH APRIL 1866

SOUTH-SIDE

SPORTSMEN'S

CLUB

OF LONG ISLAND

H. President.
J. H. Hackett

Secretary.
W. H. Hackett

President.
J. H. Hackett

Treasurer.
W. H. Hackett

Council.
J. H. Hackett

MEMBERS.

CLUB LIST OF 1872

THE CLUB

THE South Side Sportsmen's Club—
or, as we usually call it, the South
Side Club, was organized in 1866
by a number of men, who, for sometime
prior to that, had been in the habit of
coming to what was then known as "Obe
Snedecor's" for fishing, shooting and other
objects of a social character. "Snedecor's"
had been known for many years as a
resort for sportsmen, and, as far back as
1836, Philip Hone says in his diary, of a
trip to what is believed to be the present
Club :

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

“Giraud and I started this morning on
“a fishing excursion to Long Island. We
“dined at Timothy Carman’s, where we
“met John Suydam, Garrit Storm, Edmund
“Smith and Augustus Wynkoop. We
“went on to Snedecor’s after dinner,
“where we found the house so full that, if
“we had not taken the precaution to write
“in advance for beds, we might have lain
“on the floor. . . . The weather was fine,
“with southerly wind—a good prospect
“for fishing.”

Mr. Herbert Clarke has told me of trips
to Snedecor’s in 1849, and I have been
acquainted with several men, now dead,
who as young men many years ago were
accustomed to visit what is now the South
Side Club.

From the earliest records of the Club,

THE CLUB

which are contained in a manuscript diary, beginning with April 18, 1866, it would seem that the fishing was of a very different kind from the present, that a great deal of attention was paid to the races at the Fashion Track, and that trap shooting was indulged in to a great extent. Elaborate shooting rules are contained in the earlier annual reports, and the old diary I refer to is full of pigeon-shoot records.

This diary, which is fairly consecutive, runs from April, 1866, to June 18, 1875. The first part is quite full of all kinds of incidents, but toward the end it is much more on the order of the present fish record, other incidents being passed over entirely, or referred to very briefly. The diary is rather facetious in many places, but its interest lies in the fact that it is the

earliest record of the Club, and that it tells of the exploits of the early members.

The earliest annual report now existing is that of the year 1869; it is not known whether any earlier report was printed. The Secretary has had bound up all the reports he could find, and they are as follows: the reports of the years 1869, 1870, 1873, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1879, 1880 and 1881 (in one), 1882, and from then on consecutively to the present time. Beginning with 1875, and down to 1893, the annual reports contain the Executive and Fish Committees' reports, and those of the Treasurer, and from 1883 on, the reports contain a map of the property.

The date of the first annual dinner does not seem to have been preserved; the second dinner is described in the diary as follows:

1866
Thursday Apr 19th

Foggy morning wind South West. A no
breeze yet. Warm pleasant day

Friday Apr 20th

Foggy morning pleasant day warm
Wind South West breeze not arrived at
1 o'clock. Vessel arrived at 4 o'clock. Great show
of fish in creek. Mr. Rogers, Hedges, took 8 fine
cats. 6 weighing about 6 lbs. Some took
at least 15 average weight over 1 lb

Saturday Apr 21st

Wind S W quite warm. 6 fish taken in creek
weighing 17 lbs. 4 in Mill tail quite small.
Quite shower about 5 o'clock.

Sunday Apr 22nd

Wind S W clear & more rain. Mr. John & I went
to fish in creek, sweeping 2 1/2 lbs. - 17 fish in all.
J. L. Knapp took 2 fish one about 1 lb. in 1866

Monday Apr 23

Rain - wind about South East. Fish
asparagus.

Tuesday April 24

Wind N W
Blowing gale rained no sun
very unpleasant all day

THE CLUB

"Saturday, March 2d, 1867.

"Wind N. E. cold disagreeable rainy
"day ; about 25 Fish taken in Pond & Mill
"Tail, Mr. Moore taking 3 that weighed 3
"lbs. Rest average $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Mr. Rogers
"took one fish at Schooner Hole weighing
"2 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. Had Annual Dinner persons pres-
"ent Mess. S. F. Knapp, A. M. Stetson,
"Col. Johnson, G. L. Knapp, Jones Rog-
"ers, Benj. Moore, C. R. Trafford, George
"G. Wilmerding, Jos. Allen, Robt. Norton,
"W. R. Beebe, Geo. G. Barnard, Jno. K.
"Hackett, J. W. Masury, W. C. Barrett,
"H. Waldo, C. Banks, 'Gen.' Van-Vliet,
"W. R. Garrison, F. E. Smith, Jos. Ken-
"nard, Geo. Dollon, Fred. L. Lawrence,
"Geo. B. Alley, Jas. Meyer, Jr., & friend,
"E. E. Holley & friend, F. S. Stallknecht &
"friend, J. Larocque & friend, John Halsey

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

" & Jesse Smith. After dinner had Songs
" Toasts Speeches by Mess. Larocque, Bar-
" rett, Lawrence, Holley, Meyer, Banks,
" Gen. Van-Vliet. Song by Mr. Stetson,
" & last but not least 'The Last Rose of
" Summer' with variations whistled by Mr.
" Lawrence. Thus ended the Second An-
" nual Dinner of South Side Club."

The membership of the Club is one hundred, but the charter permits a membership of three hundred. There have been 416 members since the Club was first organized, and the rapidity of the changes in membership may be instanced by the fact that I became a member in April, 1896, and am now 48 on the Club list.

There have been but five Presidents of the Club: Jones Rogers (1866-68), John K. Hackett (1868-79), James Benkard (1880-



LOOKING ACROSS THE MILL-TAIL (ABOUT 1870)

THE CLUB

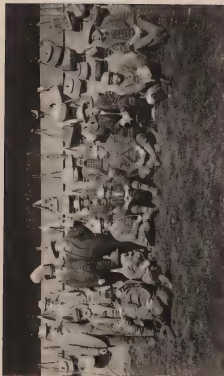
1883), Roland Redmond (1884-93), and George P. Slade, first elected in 1895 and still President. There was a vacancy in the presidency in 1894. Slade has held the office of President longer than any of his predecessors.

It is curious to see how the expenses have varied, and how, in spite of the close attention paid to the management of the Club by the officers and committees, the Club has become more and more expensive to maintain, although the simplicity of the Club cannot be said to have changed. The Treasurer's report for 1875 shows a total cash account of \$10,000 in round figures; in that of 1907 it is nearly \$95,000. Among the 1875 items of receipts is a small sum representing rent of the mill. The mill remained a

source of income for a good many years after that.

The Club has had its lean, as well as its fat, years, and the following rather pathetic appeal was made to the members by the Executive Committee, in the Club book for 1884:

“In closing this report, your Committee
“again beg to call your attention to the
“disparity between the number of active,
“or rather visiting, and non-visiting mem-
“bers of the Club. With an establishment
“kept open at all seasons of the year, it is
“absolutely necessary for its support to
“have a better attendance than that which
“the Club now has, and it is earnestly
“hoped that the habitués will do all in
“their power to impress on the non-vis-
“iting members the attractions of their



A GROUP OF CLUB MEMBERS

WILLIAM HARTLEY, LINDSEY, JR., and other members

1926-27. The group consists of the following: HARTLEY, JR., LINDSEY, JR., and other members

THE CLUB

“Club. Certainly nowhere at all seasons
“can a more pleasant climate be found,
“and to those fond of sport, nowhere in
“the world can the fishing be surpassed.
“Our brook is as wild and picturesque as
“any that can be found in many a day’s
“journey, and for those who will not
“wade, the well-stocked ponds are close
“at hand. Is it not singular that, with all
“these advantages and attractions, not
“one half of our members choose to
“enjoy them?”

THE PROPERTY OF THE SOUTH SIDE
CLUB

THE property of the South Side Club is situated in Suffolk County in the town of Islip, about forty-five miles from Long Island City. It is a long, narrow tract of land, of irregular shape, stretching from the railroad bridge of the Montauk Branch of the Long Island Railroad Company, which crosses the Connetquot Brook, on the South, to the main line of the Long Island Railroad on the North. The Club owns 2,324 acres of land, but, in addition to this, the Club now leases 1,147 acres of land from the Breese family, adjoining the Club on the East.

THE PROPERTY OF THE SOUTH SIDE CLUB

The map I have had reproduced is drawn from the U. S. Geological Survey. It shows with sufficient detail the features of our property.

Our original purchase was made in 1866, and extended on the North only to a little above what are now the hatcheries. On the South, however, we owned below the railroad to Mr. Cutting's brook, on the West side of the Connetquot River. In 1882, an arrangement was made with Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt, who then owned most of the land North of the hatcheries, for the leasing of 1,400 acres of his property at a rental equal to $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ on the price of the land. Subsequently the Club acquired title to this land, giving in exchange what we owned South of the railroad.

In 1891 we purchased about seventy

additional acres at the Northern end of the property, near the railroad. This was a wedge-shaped piece, cutting into the Club land at the Northeast corner, which at that point was originally bounded on the East by the Brook. The Club property, like all Long Island on the South shore, is flat and is covered, except in the immediate neighborhood of the Club House, where there are some very beautiful trees of about forty years of age, with the scrub growth so common on Long Island. The old photographs of the Club, which I have had reproduced, show the general growth of these trees.

Through the property runs the Connetquot Brook, for a distance of about four miles, that is, from railroad to railroad. This Brook rises in a marsh North of the

THE PROPERTY OF THE SOUTH SIDE CLUB

main line (not owned by us), and empties into the Great South Bay. Its lower part is called to-day the "Great River," but on the older maps and on the government maps it is shown as the "Connetquot River." The Long Island Historical Society says that Connetquot means "At the Long River." The East Brook, commonly known as Rattlesnake Brook, runs into the Connetquot below the railroad, after flowing through the Club property and forming Slade's Pond and the East Pond.

The Southern part of the Club property once belonged to O. B. Snedecor, who, as I have said, owned the hotel, now part of the Club House, as well as the old mill, still such a conspicuous feature of our landscape. As the property originally existed,

the highway which now crosses the brook at the lower end of the Lower Pond, ran past the Club House, and crossed the brook by a ford at the point where the bridge connects the two little islands in the mill-tail. This road is distinctly shown on the view of the Club House looking across the mill-tail. Subsequently this ford was abandoned, and the road was carried across the crest of the dam, and later on, by agreement with the highway commissioners of the town of Islip, the Club joined in the expense of building the road at its present location, so that it should not run so near the Club House. This matter was one of the greatest importance to the Club, and it is discussed at length in the report of the Executive Committee of 1876, in which that Committee says :



THE CLUB HOUSE ABOUT 1870

“From the statements made by the
“Commissioners having the matter in
“charge, and from the old surveys, it
“would appear that a part of the road as
“originally laid out and partially dedicated
“to public use, runs through the brook in
“front of the Club House, and that the
“present line, if insisted upon, would take
“in a portion of the first preserve in front
“of the Club House, taking away a num-
“ber of the willow trees, destroying the
“little island which divides the running
“waters of the brook, crossing on the
“other side in front of Stephen Murray’s
“house, and cutting through his area . . .
“Southeast of the mill. Such a change,
“the Executive Committee believe, would
“work great injury to the Club, impair its
“value, embarrass its members, rudely

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

“divide its property, interrupt its privacy,
“and, so believing, they feel it to be their
“duty to respectfully protest against the
“proposed action of the Commissioners
“in making the proposed change, which
“would return the county road to the old
“line of travel.”

The Committee further reports that a proposition was made to the Commissioners to lay out a new county road, to be afterward formally dedicated to public use, as it now runs, across the Connet-quot, below what became the Lower Pond. The Club, in consideration of the township surrendering the old road to the Club as its property, agreed to pay for cutting through, laying out and grading the proposed new road. The town of Islip agreed to build the wooden bridges



THE CLUB HOUSE ABOUT 1876

necessary to cross the brook at the expense of the township.

The work on this road was quite expensive, and its completion was delayed until 1881. If, now, we consider for a moment how annoying it would be if the highway ran in front of the Club House, and then turned and crossed the mill-tail, we must feel that the Executive Committee of 1875 had the interests of the Club deeply at heart, and did an excellent piece of work.

The Main Pond is made by the dam, which formerly supplied the old mill with water. The Lower Pond did not exist until the highway was changed, as referred to before. By the construction of the embankment on which this highway runs, a dam was placed across the stream

which resulted in the creation, in 1880, of the Lower Pond and flume.

It is within the memory of many members of the Club that the Mill-Tail was a shallow stream—the very fact that a ford existed below the mill, showing that it can never have had any such depth as at present.

The general condition of things, between the present flume and Vanderbilt's house, was then about the same as it is now. The land on the East side of the brook, above the turn into the river, below the railroad bridge, was in its present condition of marshiness, but the shores of the river below have been somewhat filled in on the West side of the river, with sand taken out when the channels have been dredged at various times, while the

river has been widened by dredging on Vanderbilt's shore. The outlet of Rattlesnake Brook, below the railroad, has been very much changed by being dredged and the sand taken out of the brook being thrown on the banks. The Government Survey of 1874 shows quite extensive marshes along and above Cutting's Brook on the West bank of the river.

"Schooner Hole," where bass fishing is now carried on, was known by that name in the earliest days of the Club and even in much earlier times, when schooners are known to have anchored, about where Vanderbilt's landing now is, for the winter. There older members of the Club will remember catching trout, and rainbows are to this day caught at this spot. "The Willows," still standing on Vander-

bilt's shore, was another favorite place for trout fishing.

The Montauk Division of the railroad was laid out as far as Oakdale in 1868. A station was built called "Club Station" at a point on the western edge of our property, and this station was used until July 17, 1884, as I am informed by the Railroad Company. In connection with this, the minutes of the Board of Managers of the South Side Railroad of Long Island, as it was then called, of September 7, 1868, state as follows:

"Mr. Johnson reported that the Committee, to whom was referred the subject of stations intermediate between Bay Shore and Sayville, had visited the different points and located a signal station at the Club House to be called 'Club



SOUTH END OF CLUB HOUSE



NORTH END OF CLUB HOUSE

"Station.'" The Oakdale station was located at the same time.

The bridge which crosses the Connetquot was originally a trestle, but, when the road was double-tracked, and it became necessary to widen the bridge, it was reconstructed, as it now stands, in cement, this reconstruction being carried out in 1906.

Screens have been placed from time to time in different parts of the brooks, and have been moved from place to place as occasion and the cultivation of fish required, but in general the brooks have remained unchanged, except at the hatcheries, and except that on the site of the old East Brook Hatcheries a new pond, called Slade's Pond, was laid out.

Two years ago the old sluiceways,

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

where the water runs out of the Main and East Ponds, had become so rotten that it became necessary to entirely rebuild them. This was done by constructing sluiceways and flumes of cement, which will probably last as long as the Club will last. While, of course, they are not as picturesque as the old moss-covered woodwork, they are much stronger and far more practical than the old-fashioned flumes.

In other respects, in the past ten years very few changes have been made in the appearance of the Club property, with the exception of the construction of the new annex. We have occasionally lost a conspicuous tree, the garden has varied in appearance, and from time to time attempts have been made to grow flowers in front of the Club House; but really very few



WINTER PANORAMA OF CLUB HOUSE, ANNEXES, AND OLD MILL

THE OLD MILL



THE PROPERTY OF THE SOUTH SIDE CLUB

noticeable changes have been made on the grounds or in the brooks and ponds. To go further into the details of our property would, I fear, make this account wearisome.

THE CLUB HOUSE

THE oldest part of the Club House is the Northerly end, which was originally Snedecor's hotel. The general lines of this part of the house have been preserved, as can be seen by comparing the pictures of the old house with those of the present building. Snedecor's hotel had a double story veranda in front where we now have but one, and an extension at the North end which reached nearly to the present road to the hatcheries. This extension, which connected with the card room and was a story and a half high, was taken down, and the upper



THE CLUB HOUSE IN SUMMER

THE CLUB HOUSE.

story of the veranda was also removed not long after the Club took possession of the house.

The first improvement made by the Club was the erection of a small extension at the South end of the old hotel to serve as an entrance, and to contain the bar and various other conveniences. At first the outer half of this extension did not extend out flush with the front wall, but later this recess was altered as shown on the pictures.

The most important improvement made by the Club was the erection of the Billiard Room. This structure, which still shows the general outline of the original building, although it has been shingled along with the rest of the house, was at first painted white. I have been unable to

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

fix the exact date of its erection. The lower floor is our Billiard Room, which, of itself, is a very neat piece of carpentry work, for it measures 29×35 feet in the clear and has no interior supports. This room, which we all venerate, has not been changed since first erected, except that the old oil lamps were replaced by gas fixtures, and these again by electric lights, all within the past ten years. The room is too well known to need any description, but if its walls had tongues, as well as ears, what stories they could tell! I doubt if there is any room in Suffolk County which could give voice to more interesting reminiscences!

The old Franklin stove came from the Astor House. Before it Webster, Clay, and many other well-known men

THE CLUB HOUSE

toasted their shins, talked politics, and drank toddies, no doubt with as much seriousness as we do.

The old bar in the Northwest corner formerly stood in the hall (that is, when the first new extension was built by the Club), and the lockers behind it are the oldest in the Club. As originally made, each locker was half the present size, but these, being too small, were remodeled by throwing two lockers into one. The oldest of the other lockers, to the right of the door, came from Harry S. Felter's billiard room on Broadway. Their style is ancient, but we would not change them for worlds. Their capacity has never been criticised.

The case of animals and birds over these lockers, the old wind-dial, the clock,

the desk, the old chairs and sofas-- they need no description, while of the pictures on the walls I have had all I thought most interesting reproduced.

In 1886 the portion of the Club House between the Billiard Room and old Snedecor's was entirely reconstructed, in the then prevailing style of architecture. The Committee in charge of the work consisted of Hollins, Hollister, Slade, W. Bayard Cutting, and the Chairman of the Executive Committee. The plans were drawn by Bradford L. Gilbert. The improvement, authorized by a resolution of May 27th, 1885, was completed by April, 1887, and, of course, cost more than the estimated \$15,000, which was raised by an assessment of \$150 per share. Other necessary changes were made, additional



THE OLD FRANKLIN STOVE

THE CLUB HOUSE

passages had to be provided for on the upper floors, and accommodations for the Superintendent and his family had to be built. The piazza was carried around the end of the house overlooking the pond. Besides, the Club decided to shingle the whole house, so as to make it uniform, but, as the Executive Committee reported: "This was not altogether done to please the eye, as the tarred paper with the shingles, make the old Club House a warm and comfortable building during the winter and spring months."

This improvement necessitated the moving of the Billiard Room about 25 feet to the South, where it now stands. The new part includes the present dining room (the old one became the parlor), the rod room with its lockers, the stairs, the

Superintendent's room and a number of bedrooms. The new gun room, back of the rod room, was built in 1904.

Again, in 1899, the interior of the upper floors in the old house was entirely rebuilt. So many changes in partitions, stairs, etc., had been made, without regard to the location of the old beams, that these latter, lacking substantial support, were really in danger of giving way, although as sound as the day they were first put in the house.

One further change from the old appearance of the house should be mentioned, and that is, that the steps which led to the piazza along its entire length were removed, and the entrance steps and the porte-cochère built as they now exist.

All this, however, has not changed



THE BAR



THE OLD ANNEX

THE CLUB HOUSE

the general outline of old Snedecor's, or of the Billiard Room exterior, although the details have been greatly altered. A comparison of the various pictures will show just how the Club has been altered in appearance.

THE ANNEXES

In September, 1878, Benkard, Hollins, Loubat, Moore, Roland Redmond and several other members (23 in all) were authorized to build what is now known as the "Old Annex" to the South of the Club House, and in 1903, Ballard, Bowne, Fitzgerald, Sherman, Hall, Cochrane, Robinson, Strong, and such other members of the Club as they may associate with them, were authorized to build the "New Annex" to the North of the Club House.

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

The conditions on which the permission to build these houses was granted are not of sufficient interest to be set forth here. The Annexes are, of course, most comfortable. The ownership of the rooms has changed repeatedly, as the owners have either died or resigned from the Club, or got married, or for other reasons lost their active interest in the Club.



THE NEW ANNEX

WILD AND MOOR LIME GROVE



THE OLD MILL AND OTHER BUILDINGS
ON THE CLUB PROPERTY

THE mill is probably of great age. That it dates back to Revolutionary days seems certain. It is built of hand-hewn timbers, one corner resting on a pier, rising from the water, built of stones and bricks, and clearly a very old erection. The old water-wheel is still to be seen under the mill, a good deal wrecked by decay and ice, and some of the old machinery is still in the mill. How carefully the Club treasures this old relic, all of us well know.

The pump house, which is just below

the mill, and the bath house (which originally contained a large wooden tank, later superseded by a large and very elaborate bath-tub of marble) were new additions, the bath house dating from 1870, the marble bath-tub, the gift of Mr. Cutting, from 1885. It is a fact, not a legend, that certain members of the Club were once in the habit, at unusually early hours, of taking a morning dip in this famous bath-tub, but this custom has long since died out, and the bath-tub has been removed.

North of the Club House, on the site of the New Annex, there was formerly a house in which the miller lived, and across the mill-tail was a house known as "Steve Murray's." Murray's house seems ultimately to have gone to pieces, but its location can still be fixed by the trees

THE OLD MILL AND OTHER BUILDINGS

which surrounded the house and which are planted in a circle.

There were, and there still are, various out-houses near the Club House, but they are not of sufficient interest to be referred to.

In 1877 a "neat little lodge," as the Executive Committee report of 1877 calls it, was constructed near the preserves (that is, at the present East Pond) in which one of the men and his family resided for the purpose of taking care of the fish, and in 1879, at the screen on the Main Brook, the Executive Committee placed a dwelling house, and also built a preserve for young fish, thereby enabling a watchman to be placed at this most important point, as a protection against poachers. At this time, it will be remembered, the Club did not own the property North of this point. In

1883 a cottage was erected at a short distance from Banks' Stand, on the East side of the Brook, about three miles and a quarter from the Club House. This is what is now known as Henessy's. A gamekeeper by the name of Henessy was employed at that time and lived in this house.

I shall refer more at length to the hatcheries in a later chapter.

In 1890 a new coach-house was built with rooms for employees in the upper story, and at the same time lockers were put in on the floor over the Billiard Room, and the next year a new building, with apartments for the Superintendent, a kitchen, etc., was erected, the old building being entirely unfit for use.

We had put a fence 12 miles long in 1884 around our property, and in 1892



THE OLD MILL FROM THE SOUTH AND MILL-TAIL



MAIN POND BOAT LANDING

TO J. M. S. S. S.

the question of erecting a deer fence, in conjunction with our neighbors, Mr. Cutting and Mrs. Breese, was considered, but the proposition was not acted on at that time.

THE HATCHERIES

THE first hatcheries which the Club established were at the foot of the Mill-tail, in the stream which forms the islands upon which the trees grow, just below the mill. Originally the water from the mill went directly into the Mill-tail, the pump house and present sluiceway being later constructions.

An early report by Mr. Shaw, the Club Secretary (January, 1876), states that the Club "took out of the preserves in front of "the Club House from the 10th day of "July (1875), 2,500 trout and placed them "in the West Pond, which with the young



THE HATCHERIES

"increase, it is hoped will afford good "sport for the coming season." This, it may be observed, is apparently the only occasion when the Main Pond is called the West Pond. At this time, and until the hatcheries were established where they now are, there was a screen in the main brook at our boundary line, that is, about at Deep Water.

Mr. Shaw further calls attention to the fact that a large number of the fish which were put in the Main Pond in 1874 must have gone out of the Pond into salt water, and that they were unable to return because of the strength of the fall of the water at the mill dam. Two remedies were then suggested: one, to put a sluiceway or steps, by which the fish could return to their natural element, fresh water; and the

other, to put an iron gate or screen in the flume, to prevent the fish from running out. To the latter plan objection was made that the dam might give way under severe pressure, as it had done once or twice before, and the other plan was adopted and carried out in 1876.

The new preserves on the East Branch of the East Pond (of which I give a picture reproduced from the fine print in the Club Book of 1888) were established in 1875, at the spot where Slade's Pond now is, and proved a great success. In one part of them, from twenty to twenty-five thousand trout, about one year old, were soon being fed regularly every day with live bait "so as to make them of sufficient size to place in the brooks and ponds "about next October"—that is, October.



EAST BROOK HYDROELECTRIC ABOUT 1900

THE HATCHERIES

1876. It will be observed that the fish were then fed on live bait and were put out about five months earlier than has recently been the custom. Equally interesting are some letters addressed to Mr. Herbert Clarke, of the Fish Committee, by Mr. Gordon Land, of Denver, Colorado, written in 1884 and subsequent years, now in the hands of the Secretary, in which the questions of feeding the fish with live bait, and of the overcrowding of the preserves, are gone into at great length. The conclusions reached are very much the same as those reached by the Club in recent years.

Great trouble was experienced with eels in these early days, and over three thousand were taken and destroyed in the Main Pond in August and September, 1875.

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

While it would hardly be worth while to reprint the very detailed Fish Committee reports from 1877 to 1893, which are printed in the Annual Reports, the subject is of such importance that the following facts, taken from these reports, will, no doubt, prove interesting.

The gradual growth of our fish culture is a very important feature in the Club's history, for with the increase in this part of the Club's interests have come, from time to time, new and perplexing questions, which the Fish Committee has had to solve.

It will be remembered that the East Brook hatcheries were established in 1875; 10,000 fish were hatched that year, but almost immediately trouble arose from the lack of a good supply of water, the pre-

THE HATCHERIES

serves being stretched out in a continuous line, so that the lower ones got only the water which had run through the upper preserves, and which was consequently foul. It was also found that the preserves were so poorly constructed that the fish were able to escape. All this called for improvements, and at the same time the Fish Committee found that the fish in the Main Pond and Brook could not increase from natural causes, because, since the erection of the screen at the upper end of the Club's line on the Brook, some ten years before, the fish were prevented from seeking the shoal waters above, for spawning. It was therefore urged by the Committee "that the only way to replenish the now depleted waters of the Club is in following the praiseworthy

“efforts of their predecessor on the Com-
 “mittee, Mr. Shaw, in hatching each year
 “in preserves as large a number of fish as
 “possible.”

In 1877 James Riley, who so long served the Club in charge of the hatcheries, was employed, and he and his family were settled in the house at the East Brook preserves, to watch and care for the fish. Fish culture was again carried on at the mill in 1877, and in this connection the Fish Committee, after speaking of the construction of a new screen in the Main Brook, “which appears to answer the purpose of effectually stopping
 “the ascent of the fish” (beyond our line that is), refers to: “the moving of the boat
 “house, a donation by our worthy President, and the arranging of the same on



THE HATCHERIES



THE HATCHERIES

THE HATCHERIES

“the South side of the mill below the
“dam, for the purpose of hatching fish by
“artificial processes. This has, we be-
“lieve, proved an entire success. About
“100,000 eggs were obtained, and al-
“ready some 5,000 fish have made their
“appearance, and, unless some accident
“happens, at least 70,000 fry should be
“obtained.”

Mr. Robert B. Roosevelt at about the same time supplied the Club with some salmon, 1,000 of which lived in the preserves, where some attained a length of six inches.

In 1879, as I have previously said, a house was built at a point where the present hatcheries are, and a preserve for young fish was established there. The East Pond hatcheries were in full opera-

tion and they were proving wonderfully successful. Nevertheless, in their report for the year 1881, the Fish Committee refers to the injury done by the extremely cold weather in retarding the hatching at the Main House, and expresses the hope that, when the Club takes possession of the upper portion of the brook, included in the Vanderbilt exchange, they will be able to make better arrangements for the caring of a much larger number of fry.

In the report for the year 1882 is the first reference to rainbow trout; it is as follows: "Through the kindness of Professor Baird of the U. S. Fish Commission, the Club received, nearly two years ago, some California Rainbow trout eggs, and has raised from these



THE MILL-TAIL BEFORE RECONSTRUCTION



THE "LIVER HOLE"



BELOW THE OLD MILL—LOWER POND

THE HATCHERIES

“about one hundred and twenty fish,
“some of which weigh nearly a pound
“each.” I am further informed on this
subject by Mr. Clarke that: “We had 500
“eggs, hatched out most of them, and
“raised 120 fish to $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ pound, and
“from them sold several thousand large
“fish later, and put in the river many
“thousand more.”

Having finally acquired control of the whole of the Main Brook, the Fish Committee (in 1882) had six new preserves built at the Main Brook screen, and in 1883 moved the old hatching house from the mill to Riley's (East Brook hatcheries) so that Riley could have both houses under his supervision. We had on hand at the time of the making of the report for the year 1883, 30,000 yearlings and two

year olds at Riley's and at the screen; 1,000 rainbows, about twenty months old; 10,000 rainbow yearlings and a number of large trout and rainbows. Besides, 1,000,000 eggs had been taken during the season. This year we won the silver cup, still at the Club, given by Mr. Jules Reynal at the New York Fanciers' Show at Madison Square Garden.

In 1884, as an experiment, the East Pond was cleaned and deepened in places, and a number of rainbows put in the pond, but the expected sport did not materialize.

In 1888 the screen and preserves at the head of the Main Brook were covered by a wire netting, in order to protect the fish from birds and animals, and a good deal of work was done in connection with transferring all the hatcheries to their



LOWER BROOK SCREEN



BRIDGE NEAR HATCHERIES

THE HATCHERIES

present location. In 1889 a first-class hatchery was built where our present hatcheries are, together with a small ice house in which to keep the fishes' food, and a substantial waterwheel to be used to cut up the food. The house formerly occupied by the game protectors was renovated and improved, so that Riley and his family could live there, and fifteen new preserves were added. This was done partly because the East Brook had not a sufficient flow of water, and partly because by concentrating everything connected with the work, the cost was reduced.

In 1890 an experiment was made which, as early as 1892, was decided to be a mistake: I refer to the introduction of brown trout into our waters, of which in

1891 we got 25,000 eggs from the State Fish Commission in return for 75,000 trout eggs, the Cold Spring Harbor Station being short of brook trout eggs. The recommendation made at this time that all of the rainbows be sold, because they had afforded so little sport, in comparison with the large numbers put out, will seem strange to those who, since that time, have enjoyed rainbow fishing; but the destruction of the brown trout, which to this day has not been complete, meets with the approval of everybody. The injury they did to our brook trout, and their own worthlessness, is enough to justify their extermination.

The next year, 1891, further great improvements were made at the hatcheries; the dam was almost entirely rebuilt, six-

THE HATCHERIES

teen of the preserves had concrete floors put in them to keep the eels out, and 700 eels were killed at the preserves, but only after they had destroyed thousands of fry. The hatcheries were destroyed by fire in 1900, and rebuilt on a much larger scale than before.

TROUT-FISHING

AT the present time our hatcheries and preserves are probably as well managed as any in the country. At the hatcheries, there were in the spring of 1908 94,000 fry. In the sixty-one preserves, there were upwards of 90,000 yearlings, 20,000 two-year-olds and many larger fish. In regard to rainbows, we had about 35,000 yearlings on hand.

The greatest possible care is taken with the fish, which are in beautiful condition and so plentiful that this year (1908) the fishing limit was raised to 24, and so



SCREEN ON RATTLE SNAKE BROOK
HEAD OF EAST POND



SLADE'S POND

many large fish were put out, that hitherto unheard-of catches of 20 lbs. and upwards were made.

The fish are usually put into the ponds in February, and from then on have to live on natural food, of which there appears always to be an abundance. The fish usually put out are two-year-olds, but often, as in 1908, much larger fish have been put out in quantities, with the result of magnificent fishing. Of course, there are some natural fish, and, for sport, as well as for flavor and appearance, the fish which have run to salt water and come back to the flume are by many reckoned the best.

Rainbows, while no longer cultivated as before, are, for sport, when in fine condition, wonderfully good fly-fishing.

At the same time, they are much more uncertain, being often difficult to find, as they are scattered all over the upper river, and in the mouths of the creeks, as well as at the flume. At times fine catches have been made. Thus, in 1887, 265 rainbows were taken below the railroad bridge, of which 30 were of large size, running from 1¼ to 4 pounds.

To give a full account of our trout-fishing would be to tell the whole story of the Club, for with the catching and the losing of fish go the evenings when sorrow must be overcome and joy remain unconfined.

The earliest catch of which I have been able to obtain any record is that of 1849, when a trout weighing 3 lbs. 14 oz. was taken in the Mill-Tail, by a Mr. Underhill.



TROUT FISHING
ROBBINS

TROUT-FISHING

and called at the time, as Mr. Clarke tells me, the "Henry Clay" trout.

The waters where fishing is carried on are, as all know, the Main Pond, the Lower Pond, the East Pond, and Slade's Pond on our property; and the West, or Cutting's, Pond, where we are also allowed to fish; the Mill-Tail, the Flume, the East Pond flume, and the River; the Lower Brook, Rattlesnake Brook, between the East Pond and Slade's Pond, and Deep Water: in all of which fishing is done from boats, although the Lower Brook and Rattlesnake Brook are frequently waded. Above Deep Water is the Upper Brook, which is always waded, with the well-known stretches between Henessy's, Shanty, Bunce's and Deep Water.

Above the dams the largest fish are

taken in the Main Pond as a rule, although very large fish have also been taken in the Mill-Tail with a fly.

Bait-fishing is allowed in the Flume, after a date fixed by the Club, and which has varied from time to time, and has been allowed, but very rarely, in the Main Pond. The large catches of old days were mostly made with live bait, and at all times very large brook-trout which have been to sea, as well as rainbows, have been taken with bait at the flume.

Of course, different members have their pet flies, and as for tackle generally, it varies with the individuals. In fact, it has always seemed to me that one of the pleasures of fishing lies in the fact that, while there are certain rules, which must not be violated, within those limitations



PRINT
UPPER BROOK FISHING

TROUT-FISHING

individual taste and whims have full sway. The size, the color, the make of flies are a source of endless discussion. Shall it be a large Parmachene Belle, at the beginning of a season, or a Grizzly King, or a smaller fancy fly? Shall it be a two-fly cast, or a single fly? Light or heavy tackle? Or shall we listen to the voice of the scoffer who says "A South Side trout will take hold of anything"? That this is a very much exaggerated criticism of our fish many a member can testify.

The number of fish allowed to each rod has varied from 12 to 24 in the Ponds, and 24 at all times in the Upper Brook. The limit on rainbows has always been 12.

It would be difficult to say which fishing is the best. It depends entirely on the fancy of the individual. Some prefer the

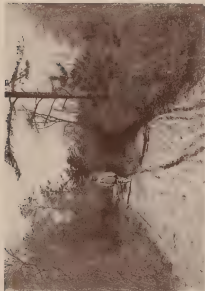
brook - fishing, others the Main Pond, others again would rather go from place to place and pick up a fish here and there. It is equally impossible to say where the prettiest fishing is, for it again depends on the individual. Some would rather spend all day whipping the brooks, and luring the larger trout from under the elder bushes and old stumps, by repeated and skilful casting; while others derive an equal pleasure from anchoring at the elbow in the Main Pond and "sniggling" for the big fish, so often found there.

Equally divided is the taste for bait-fishing, which some delight in as much as others denounce it. Having indulged in all the kinds of fishing I have referred to, I am not prepared to say which kind is less enjoyable than any other.

But this is certain—all the Club waters of which I have spoken are as beautiful in their way as anything I have seen anywhere in the world. Of course, we have no such streams as exist in the West, with rocks covered with moss, and trees of great height and spread of limb on either side—but who knows of a lovelier spot than the Mill-Tail in early summer, when the vegetation is fresh and green, and the new leaves overhanging the stream are reflected in the pool below the mill? Can any one name a lovelier sheet of water than our East Pond on a sunny day in spring, when the elder bushes, swamp maple and all the other shrubs are just bursting into leaf and bloom? And the brook—whether upper or lower, whether in summer or in winter—is there any place

wilder, as well as lovelier, in many a long hour's journey from New York?

I have rowed down the river at sunrise and seen the does come to the water's edge with their fawns and stare at the boat in silent wonderment; and one evening, coming back from bass-fishing, as we turned from the river (you will remember how, as you leave the river and "Idle Hour" disappears from view, you come into a stretch where there is no sign of man's having been there) I remember seeing a large deer standing on the East bank, with his head thrown back and his figure standing out sharply against the twilight sky; the water was as still as glass, and there was no sound not natural to the scene. These are scenes as strange, within so short a distance from



WHEELER'S CROSS-ROAD

TROUT-FISHING

New York, as the grazing of the deer among Mr. Cutting's cattle is incongruous, and I have met no one who does not agree that we are surrounded by a landscape in many respects beyond compare.

BASS-FISHING

BASS-FISHING in Great River does not appear to have been carried on prior to about 1893, when Foulke (our then Superintendent) did some fishing. From 1895 on, however, the fishing has been pretty steady, and at times extraordinary catches have been made. At first no limit was put on the bass catches, but a few years ago, it was decided to limit the catch to 12 bass per member. Unfortunately, of recent years few members have succeeded in getting their full catch.

There seems to be no doubt but that

BAAS FISHING



BASS-FISHING

the bass come up the river to spawn, or that, whenever the river has been freshly dredged, the fishing is better than after the bottom has become foul again with vegetation. That the fishing is interfered with by the nets in the Bay seems unquestionable, for, of course, these nets must prevent the bass from getting into the river.

I have found no mention in the older reports of any bass, although the presence of weak fish, perch and smelt is noted, and complaints about the nets were made many years ago; undoubtedly bass were there, but were not known to be in the river, or if known, were not fished for. This is all the more remarkable as bass-fishing was a favorite sport in the Sound and even in Hell Gate, until long after the Club was organized.

The largest bass caught was taken by F. W. Rhinelander in June, 1906, and weighed 23 lbs.; the greatest number in any one day were taken in March, 1901, by Rhinelander and his guest and by John G. Heckscher.

Bass are as capricious in Great River as anywhere else. At times the river will be full of swirling fish, not one of which will touch the best baited or most skilfully trolled hook. At times, they seem to take anything in the shape of a blood worm or sand worm, while at other times they can be taken only still-fishing with crab for bait; and then again for days the river is apparently dead.

The greatest interest is taken in this fishing, neither heat nor cold having any effect on the bass fisherman, irreverently



WHITELANDER, WHITEHEAD
BASS FISHERMEN

TEEP HOUR IN THE BACKGROUND



DAVID, COCHRAN, HALL

BASS FISHERMEN ON CUTTING'S BANK

BASS-FISHING

called by some "Worm Draggers." The pictures I have had reproduced give a better idea of the river, when bass-fishing is active, than any description can do.

I must again speak of the great beauty of the river. Especially at sunset it has a charm beyond description, even if we do have an occasional mosquito.

SHOOTING

I HAVE referred, in an earlier chapter, to trap-shooting at the South Side Club. In 1889, through the liberality of several members of the Club, a shed was erected and pigeon traps and grounds were laid out and presented to the Club. The grounds were inaugurated in December, 1889, with great success. There were thirty-seven entries, and a very handsome cup, still at the Club, was the prize. Wilmerding and De Witt tied, each shooting nine out of ten birds, and Wilmerding won on shooting off the tie.

Shooting is still carried on quite exten-

SHOOTING

sively. In 1901 Heber Bishop presented the Club with a tower from which clay pigeons were to be launched, which has been used to some extent. The shooting is, however, usually done with traps of the ordinary kind.

As to quail-shooting, the Club for many years past has from time to time taken up the question of stocking our grounds with quail, with more or less success. Many years ago, clearings were made and shelters built in buckwheat patches for the preservation of the quail during the winter; but the birds seem to have persisted in wandering away from the Club grounds, and in no case has the stocking of the grounds been very successful, greatly to the disappointment of

those who, like de Goicouria, have spent so much time and trouble over this matter. The undergrowth, in any event, is rather too thick for good quail-shooting, and it requires considerable energy and patience to get at the birds. The report of the Executive Committee for 1891 refers to the killing in the past season of 113 quail, and to an appropriation of \$1,000 for the purpose of making clearings in order to facilitate the shooting, but the very next year the Committee reports that the shooting did not appear to justify the outlay for the clearings referred to. In spite of former disappointments, within the past two years a large number of clearings were planted with buckwheat and other food for the birds, and several broods of young birds have recently been seen.



SILVERING, COOK, & BROWN

A LECTURE BY DE GOICOURIA AFTER A TRAP-SHOOT

SHOOTING

In regard to duck-shooting, from time to time fine bags have been made in the brooks of black ducks, mallard, wood ducks, green wing teal and others. Of course, the flight of birds near the mouth of the river is far greater than over the Club property, but, as I am only interested in our own property, I do not think it necessary to go into any detailed account of the fine shooting, which has been had at the ponds, where the Great River empties into the Bay.

The presence of deer in large quantities on the Club property is well known, and at least on one occasion the question came up of building a fence, provided Mr. Cutting and Mrs. Breese would join in enclosing certain portions of their property.

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

Mrs. Breese did not consent to do this, and so nothing came of the proposition. Deer are occasionally killed on the Club property. In summer they are so tame that they graze on the meadows adjoining the Club lands with Mr. Cutting's cattle, and at night are seen close to the Club House, and have even been known to eat the flower beds in front of the house.

An examination of the vermin book shows a remarkable number of animals and birds found on the Club property, which are classed as vermin, and therefore persistently destroyed.

From the gamekeepers' records, it appears that foxes, raccoons, opossums, skunks, minks, weasels, cats, woodchucks, muskrats, hawks, owls, blue her-



DEER GRAZING NEAR THE CLUB HOUSE

SHOOTING

ons, green herons, quacks, American bittern, kingfishers, jays, crows, rattlesnakes, black snakes and adders, have been killed on the Club property during the space of one year. It is a singular thing that, in spite of the war waged on these various creatures, they continue to turn up. Even to this day, minks are seen and sometimes killed. As for rattlesnakes, they are seen from time to time, and hardly a year passes without some being killed. They have not been known to injure people.

Here I must stop, or my book will become too long, although I feel that I have failed to do justice to the South Side Club. I fear I have not given enough details in some places, while in others I may have said too much; but some one else may be

THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

able to go over my work and elaborate it. Whatever it may be worth, I hope that, after reading it, you will not think you have wasted your time or I mine.

MAP OF THE CLUB PROPERTY

The map of the Club property and the adjoining country is a photographic enlargement of the topographical features of the United States Geological Survey, the contour lines being omitted. The scale is about 3,200 feet to the inch. I have added the names connected with our property; some of the roads shown on our Club book map do not, however, appear on this map. The boundaries of the Club property are approximately correct.



THE SOUTH SIDE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

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